infrastructure created in this regard to serve as a back-bone for international tourism in times to come; (vi) Create conditions in which India attains a very great reputation for ethical trade and business practices; and (vii) Help in initiation of a great reform movement in India, a sort of new renaissance which would make India more creative and constructive and bring about a work culture of the highest class and also project India as a unique country which provides opportunities for physical invigoration, mental rejuvenation, cultural enrichment and spiritual elevation.

The Government is also stepping up efforts at promotion of India as an attractive tourist destination, *inter alia*, by

(1) Restructuring and modernisation of overseas Government of India Tourist Offices.

(2) Associating State Governments in promotion of domestic tourism.

(3) Collaborating with the private sector for promotion.

(4) Stepping up efforts at promotion in potential markets.

(5) Supporting new products, in demand in foreign market.

(6) Extensive use of Information Technology.

(7) Joint Promotions with potential tour operators, airlines, etc.

(8) Promotion of PIOs/NRIs.

**Development of Rural Tourism**

2414. SHRI R.P. GOENKA : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have studied the concept and potential of developing rural tourism to showcase the rural life as an economic activity for the rural areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the proposals/programmes drawn up, if any, in this regard; and

(c) the details of any comparative studies made with other countries especially the Western where it is widely prevalent and has now also been successfully tried in China, Indonesia, Hungary, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) to (c) Rural Tourism Development strategy has been envisaged as a major area of growth, development and employment creation in the 10th Plan.

**Development of Temples for Tourist Attraction**

2415. SHRI MAN MOHAN SAMAL : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether temples in India are some important places of tourist attraction;

(b) if so, how many such places have been identified by Government which attract tourists from all corners of India and abroad;

(c) whether Government have taken any measures for the promotion, development and maintenance of such places; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Identification of tourist centres including temples is primarily the responsibility of the State Government concerned.

(c) and (d) Promotion, development and maintenance of the temples is done by separate trusts, boards and local bodies. However, Ministry of Tourism extends financial assistance in respect of specific tourism infrastructure projects at various pilgrim centres which are prioritised in consultation with State/Union Territory Governments, Financial assistance is also provided to charitable institutions, trusts, boards and local bodies responsible for the maintenance of the pilgrim centres.

During the last 3 years, 48 tourism infrastructure projects amounting to Rs. 1650.41 lakhs were sanctioned at various pilgrim centres in the country.

**Valuables stolen from old Lingaraj Temple in Orissa**

2416. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether valuables were stolen from 11th century old Lingaraj Temple in Orissa;